

I claim:

1. A method to provide for fail-safe operation in a virtual switch, the method comprising:
  - 5 (a) identifying a first switching device with a primary configuration management module (CMM), the first switching device being one of a plurality of switching devices in a system of switching devices, wherein the switching devices of the system are linked via a full duplex ring;
  - (b) identifying a second switching device with a secondary CMM, the second switching device being one of the plurality of switching devices in the system;
  - 10 (c) identifying one or more additional switching devices operatively linked within the system of switching devices, wherein one or more of the additional switching devices comprises a CMM;
  - (d) soliciting configuration information updates from the second switching device and additional switching devices;
  - 15 (e) storing the configuration information acquired by means of the configuration information updates in the primary switching device; and
  - (f) synchronizing the stored configuration information at the first switching device with a duplicate configuration information store at the second switching device.

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